



# North Central Idaho News

CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March increased to 3.9 percent from February's rate of 3.4 percent, as shown in North Central Idaho Table 1. In March 2005 the rate was 5.2 percent.

## SPECIAL TOPIC: Population

Between 2000 and 2005, the population in north central Idaho decreased, according to recently released data by the U.S. Bureau of Census, while Idaho's population increased by 10.4 percent. Clearwater County lost 6.2 percent of its population in that time. The region's economic engine, Nez Perce County, grew by only 1.4 percent, far below increases generated in other Idaho economic centers such as Canyon County, where population rose 25.2 percent, and Kootenai County, which posted an increase of 17.7 percent. By far, the north central region of the state has not participated in the strong population growth experienced by other regions in the state. See North Central Idaho Tables 2 and 3 on page 12.

## Training Survey for Business

Lewis-Clark State College has developed a survey of employee training needs. This survey may be used to request credit coursework or non-credit training for employees. It may also be used to survey employee interest in specialized training for job advancement. A representative from the college is available to customize the survey to meet specific employer circumstances. For a sample survey or to find out more about this program call (208) 792-2837.

North Central Idaho Table 1: Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment  
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Mar 2006*	Feb 2006	Mar 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,580	28,610	29,580	-0.1	-3.4
Unemployment	1,120	960	1,530	16.7	-26.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	3.4	5.2		
Total Employment	27,460	27,650	28,050	-0.7	-2.1
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,850	28,890	29,440	-0.1	-2.0
Unemployment	1,390	1,250	1,300	11.2	6.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.8	4.3	4.4		
Total Employment	27,460	27,640	28,140	-0.7	-2.4
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,670	26,580	26,900	0.3	-0.9
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,230	4,220	4,440	0.2	-4.7
Natural Resources & Mining	200	220	170	-9.1	17.6
Construction	1,110	1,120	1,360	-0.9	-18.4
Manufacturing	2,920	2,880	2,910	1.4	0.3
Wood Product Manufacturing	540	540	530	0.0	1.9
Food Manufacturing	20	20	60	0.0	-66.7
Paper Manufacturing	1,070	1,080	1,130	-0.9	-5.3
Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,240	1,190	4.0	8.4
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	22,440	22,360	22,460	0.4	-0.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,390	5,360	5,280	0.6	2.1
Wholesale Trade	660	660	680	0.0	-2.9
Retail Trade	3,430	3,400	3,430	0.9	0.0
Utilities	80	80	90	0.0	-11.1
Transportation & Warehousing	1,220	1,220	1,080	0.0	13.0
Information	420	400	390	5.0	7.7
Financial Activities	1,840	1,830	1,890	0.5	-2.6
Professional & Business Services	1,570	1,560	1,650	0.6	-4.8
Education & Health Services	4,510	4,510	4,450	0.0	1.3
Leisure & Hospitality	2,290	2,300	2,430	-0.4	-5.8
Other Services	1,110	1,090	1,140	1.8	-2.6
Government Education	2,500	2,480	2,530	0.8	-1.2
Government Administration	2,110	2,130	1,970	-0.9	7.1
Government Tribes	700	700	730	0.0	-4.1

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Clearwater County

- According to a recently completed feasibility study, expanded marina facilities are indeed a "feasible means to offset a significant part of economic losses created by the annual drawdowns of Dworshak Reservoir." Under consideration are the expansion of the ex-

North Central Idaho Table 2: Cumulative Estimates of Population Change for North Central Idaho and Rankings: April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2005

Geographic Area	Population Estimates		Change, 2000 to 2005		County Rank Change, 2000 to 2005	
	July 1, 2005	April 1, 2000 Estimates Base	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Idaho	1,429,096	1,293,956	135,140	10.4	(X)	(X)
Clearwater	8,373	8,930	-557	-6.2	42	43
Idaho	15,697	15,511	186	1.2	26	31
Latah	34,714	34,935	-221	-0.6	38	35
Lewis	3,750	3,747	3	0.1	33	33
Nez Perce	37,931	37,410	521	1.4	20	28
North Central Idaho	100,465	100,533	-68			

isting small boat marina at Big Eddy and the establishment of a houseboat marina that would include rentals at Bruces Eddy. Within seven years, consultants estimate the projects have the potential to create over 40 jobs and add up to \$3.5 million to the local economy. The Big Eddy small boat marina is currently full and maintains a waiting list for boat slips. The consultants believe that an additional 50 slips at Big Eddy could be easily filled. As to the possibility of a large houseboat marina at Bruces Eddy, the report states that an analysis of potential markets and activity on similar lakes indicates Dworshak could support a fleet of up to 100 houseboats. The consultants believe that the unique characteristics of Dworshak that include access to undeveloped areas, wildlife viewing and hunting and fishing opportunities can be capitalized on to create new demand for these facilities on the reservoir.

#### Latah County

- More than 2,000 active University of Idaho employees will be getting new medical benefits packages this summer. The changes constitute an effort to avoid a \$1.6 million increase in the cost of providing medical benefits to employees. Paul Michaud, assistant vice president of human resources, said medical benefits cost the university \$23.3 million last year. "Had no changes been made, plan costs would have been \$24.9 million," according to a prepared statement provided by Michaud. "This would have resulted in an employee cost increase of \$23 on average per pay period." The university, the county's largest employer, decided to follow the recommendation of its benefits advisory group instead. The group recommended that employees be given four options,

North Central Idaho Table 3: Cumulative Estimates of Natural Increase Population Change April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2005

Geographic Area	Natural Increase		
	Total	Births	Deaths
Clearwater County	-83	393	476
Idaho County	-17	795	812
Latah County	1,027	2,168	1,141
Lewis County	10	224	214
Nez Perce County	131	2,357	2,226

including no coverage at all. The other three plans have different coverage provisions and different rates that will be deducted from employee paychecks. Michaud joked that employees should select "Plan A if you plan to be healthy, Plan B if you plan to be sick and Plan C if you plan to pay a lot." The differences between the plans are found in such areas as premiums, deductibles and co-pays.

- Pullman, Wash., is a contender for a major expansion of Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories that could bring 300 more jobs to the city. President Edmund O. Schweitzer III has announced the company's manufacturing operations in Pullman are nearing their capacity. He wants to build a 100,000-square-foot manufacturing building within the next 18 months. Schweitzer founded the company in Pullman in 1982 to market an electrical relay he invented. The company designs, manufactures, sells and distributes products for the protection, automation, control and metering of electric power systems. It has grown to include more than 1,200 employees and 50 locations worldwide. Schweitzer's work force expanded by 210 world-

wide in 2005, including 137 jobs in Pullman. Schweitzer announced plans in February to bring 168 jobs to Pullman this year. Pullman is the likely site for an expansion, Schweitzer said, although he is considering locating the manufacturing facility in a state with a "less restrictive business climate." Possible alternatives include Idaho, Texas, Tennessee, Florida and Wisconsin. Schweitzer thinks "anti-opportunity laws and attitudes" in Washington and Whitman County impede growth, including the estate tax and restrictive zoning laws. Schweitzer is a vocal opponent of the estate tax and has lobbied Washington state and the U.S. Congress to do away with the tax he fears will destroy family owned businesses. About 300 of the 900 Schweitzer employees working in Pullman live in Idaho.

#### Nez Perce County

- Farmers in north central Idaho report conditions for growing wheat appear good this year with abundant rain, but they are concerned about rising energy costs. As a group, wheat growers and other commodity organizations have asked Congress to open known reserves of natural gas to supplement the current supply. They are also asking for emergency funding to cover some of the expense related to rising energy costs. Roy Patton, supervisor of the University of Idaho Parker Experiment Station near Moscow, said precipitation was 225 percent of normal in January and 116 percent of normal in February. He said March was slightly below normal and April was a little ahead of the average. "The winter wheat looks pretty decent — the stuff that can hold its breath or can tread water," Patton said. "The thing is it's not always exactly how much precipitation we get. It's kind of a timing thing."

- Potlatch Corp.'s timberlands will play an important role as the company settles into its new structure as a real estate investment trust. Sales of standing timber to other businesses and land leases for hunting or recreation are among the key areas that will drive Potlatch's businesses. Since Potlatch's conversion to a trust on Jan. 1, those transactions have not been subject to federal income taxes. Potlatch's manufacturing operations, which are still taxed, will support this new role. "We will continue to invest in the maintenance of our manufacturing businesses that are performing well," said Michael Covey, Potlatch's new president and chief executive officer. According to Covey, Potlatch's Lewiston manufacturing operations is expected to be business as usual. The complexion of the 667,000 acres Potlatch owns in Idaho's backcountry will continue to change as part of an ongoing Potlatch initiative. Potlatch plans to increase timber harvesting in Idaho by 25 percent in the next five years as long as log prices remain good. William DeReu will be vice president of land sales and development, a newly created business segment. DeReu was director of land asset management for Plum Creek Timber Inc. In that position, he marketed and developed land for uses other than timber production. He also negotiated conservation sales and easements. Some Potlatch property in Idaho and Minnesota might be sold for cabin sites, Covey said.

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## SEASONAL FARM UPDATES AVAILABLE ONLINE

The first 2006 issue of Idaho Farm Update was published May 5. This one-page flyer provides bi-weekly updates on Idaho's agricultural conditions, labor demands and wages from May to September. To see an issue, type the following address in your Web browser:

[http://lmi.idaho.gov/admin/  
uploadedPublications/3723\\_farmlaborenglish.pdf](http://lmi.idaho.gov/admin/uploadedPublications/3723_farmlaborenglish.pdf).

To view the publication in Spanish, type the following address in your Web browser:

[http://lmi.idaho.gov/admin/uploadedPublications/3722\\_farmlaborspanish.pdf](http://lmi.idaho.gov/admin/uploadedPublications/3722_farmlaborspanish.pdf).

